

Torrey Pines

State Natural Reserve and State Beach



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Torrey Pines SNR and SB

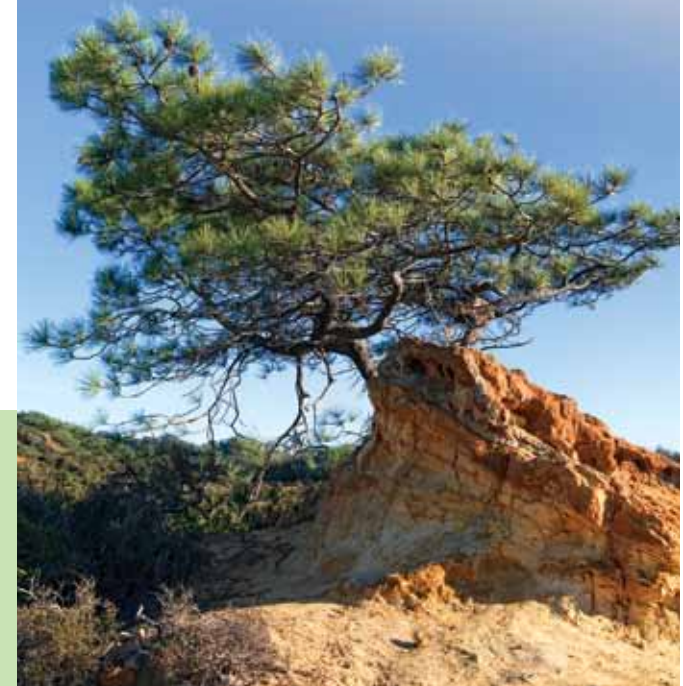
12600 N. Torrey Pines Rd.

San Diego, CA 92037

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*Land of carved
sandstone, evergreen
chaparral and spring
wildflowers, Torrey Pines
State Natural Reserve
preserves America's
rarest pine tree.*





Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve

is a **majestic wilderness** in the middle of an increasingly urban area. Its fragile environment of high, broken cliffs and deep ravines overlooking the sea is home to one of the world's rarest pine trees—*Pinus torreyana*. The Torrey pines are believed to be the remnants of an ancient woodland that once flourished along the southern California coast, but now they grow naturally only on this small strip of San Diego coastline and on Santa Rosa Island. Here, the tree clings to the face of the crumbling sandstone or stands tall in sheltered canyons.

Torrey Pines State Beach, adjacent to the reserve, stretches four and one-half miles from Del Mar past Los Peñasquitos Marsh Natural Preserve to Torrey Pines Mesa.

The sandy beach invites swimming, surfing and fishing. Low tide—when the red-tinged bluff is reflected in wet sand—is a good time to stroll the beach.

Across the highway from the beach, the Los Peñasquitos Marsh Natural Preserve provides a protected breeding ground for many species of birds and fish.

PARK HISTORY

Human History

The Kumeyaay people who lived at Torrey Pines traveled in bands of extended families throughout the coast, mountains and desert foothills. Their lands extended from the Pacific Ocean, south to Ensenada, Mexico,

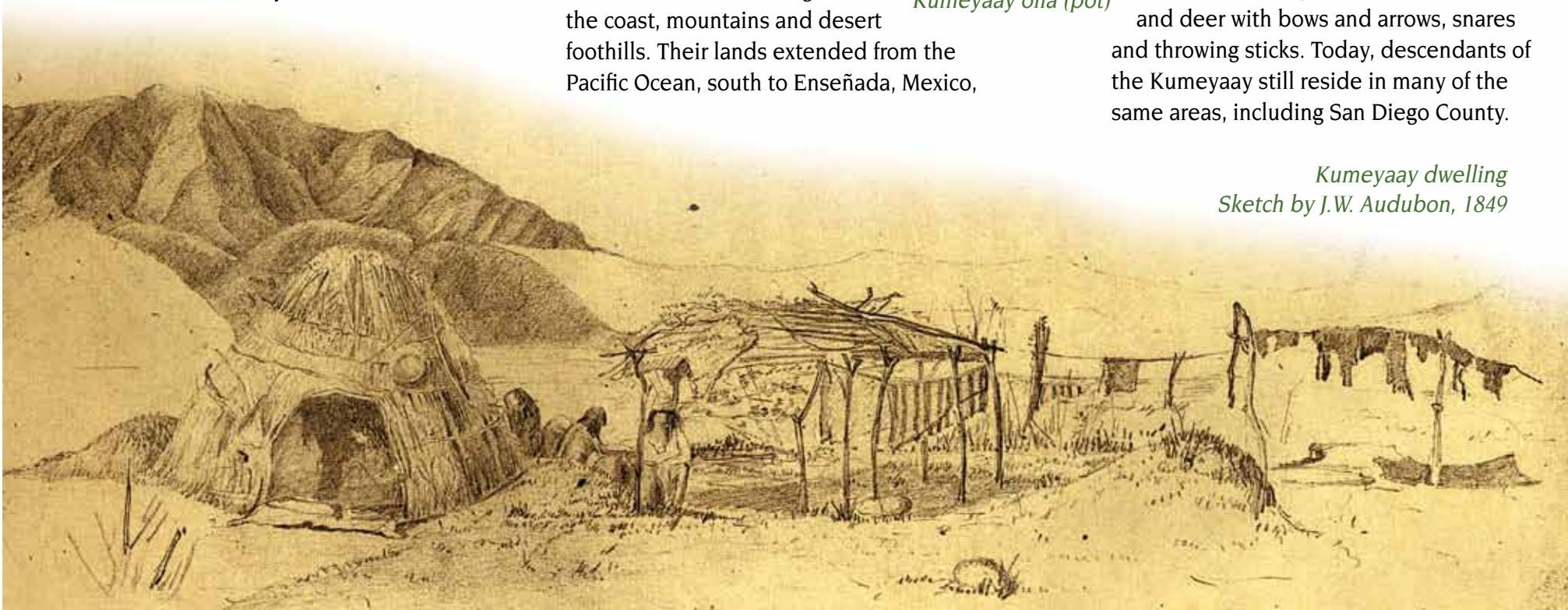
east to the dunes of the Colorado River, and north through the Warner Springs Valley to what is now Oceanside. They lived in small dwellings and shade ramadas made of willow, oak, manzanita, deerweed, tule, chamise and other local plants.

The Kumeyaay were seasonal hunters and gatherers. They collected roots, berries, nuts and seeds—some of which were used for medicinal purposes—and practiced limited horticulture. Using fishhooks and nets, they caught a variety of sea animals, and picked up grunion, shellfish and mollusks from the beaches. The Kumeyaay hunted such game as rabbits, quail and deer with bows and arrows, snares and throwing sticks. Today, descendants of the Kumeyaay still reside in many of the same areas, including San Diego County.



Kumeyaay olla (pot)

*Kumeyaay dwelling
Sketch by J.W. Audubon, 1849*



NATURAL HISTORY

Nearly a million years of rising and falling seas, heavy rains and erosion by streams and creeks gradually formed the layered sandstone terraces that make up the present reserve. Some geological formations are more than 45 million years old, and some rocks have traveled from as far away as central Mexico. The continuous motion of the surf creates an ever-changing seascape—challenging artists and photographers to record its latest look.

Varying elevations have produced habitats that range from salt to fresh water, from coastal strand to sage scrub, from salt marsh to chaparral to conifer woodland.

The area's mild temperatures range from a January low of about 45 degrees to a typical August high of between 75 and 80 degrees. In June and July, it is not uncommon for coastal fog to last all day, enabling the Torrey pines to survive in this unlikely environment.

Photo courtesy of the Scripps College Archives, Denison Library



Ellen Browning Scripps

THE TORREY PINES

Early Spanish explorers named the grove of trees in the area *Punto de Los Arboles*, or “Point of Trees.” The trees served as a landmark for sailors navigating off the coast. In 1850—the year of California’s statehood—botanist Charles C.

Parry identified this pine as a unique species and named it after his friend John Torrey, a leading botanist of that time.

When Dr. Parry returned to the area in 1883, he was distressed over the lack of protection for the trees. He urged the San Diego Society of Natural History to save them from extinction. In 1885, San Diego officials offered a \$100 bounty for anyone caught vandalizing a Torrey pine tree. Other threats included clear-cutting the trees to use the land for cattle grazing. The San Diego City Council passed an 1899 ordinance that set aside the initial 369 acres to be used as a public park.

Concerned newspaperwoman and philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps purchased land slated for subdivision and donated the North and Parry Groves to the people of

San Diego to protect the Torrey pines. In 1916, Guy Fleming, a botanist working for the San Diego Society of Natural History, reported damage to the trees by heavy public use. Miss Scripps stirred citizen interest in protecting the trees. In 1921 she and the City Park Commission appointed Mr. Fleming custodian of Torrey Pines Reserve. By the time of her death in 1932, Ms. Scripps had contributed significantly to the establishment of the reserve.

THE RESERVE

Today’s 2,000-acre reserve contains about 300 endangered and protected species of native plants. These vanishing habitats are home to sand verbena and beach primrose in the coastal strand areas, as well as California sagebrush, California buckwheat, black sage, and coastal barrel cacti in the coastal sage scrub community. The mesas and other high elevations are host to the chaparral community of plants, including chamise, manzanita, ceanothus, California scrub oak, toyon and mountain mahogany.

At the only contiguous conifer woodland in Southern California, Torrey pines have extensive root systems due to the generally poor soil and arid climate. The variety of pine shapes is dictated by the elements—dwarfed and gnarled where most exposed to wind and salty air, or taller and more upright in better-sheltered areas.

NATURAL PRESERVES

Two outstanding areas have been designated as Natural Preserves by the State Park and Recreation Commission. Ellen Browning Scripps Natural Preserve is the



Striated sandstone cliff

area around Parry Grove and Guy Fleming trails. Los Peñasquitos Marsh Natural Preserve is one of the last remaining salt marsh areas and waterfowl refuges in southern California. Home to several rare and endangered species of birds, the reserve provides a vital stopping or nesting place for many migratory waterfowl. Trails in the

reserve may be closed at times to allow the natural features to recuperate from abuse, overuse or natural disasters.

WILDLIFE

The intertidal zones are rich in sea life: limpets, shore crabs and hermit crabs, mussels, barnacles, sea anemones and various species of snails and shells. High above the sea, the bluffs offer excellent vantage points to watch the annual gray whale migration. Dolphins, seals, sea lions and porpoises may be seen year-round.

About two hundred species of birds are protected at the reserve, including migratory waterfowl. Resident shore birds include brown and American white pelicans, black-bellied and snowy plovers, American avocets, western sandpipers, willets, whimbrels, sanderlings, great egrets and longbilled curlews. Inland, brown towhees, Nuttall's woodpeckers, Anna's hummingbirds, California quail and mockingbirds are often found.



Visitor Center (Lodge)

Occasionally, visitors may see gray foxes, bobcats, coyotes and mule deer. Reptile residents include rattlesnakes and various other snakes and species of lizards, including the endangered horned lizard.

RECREATION

For current trail maps and trail status, visit www.torreypine.org.

Trails

- 0.6-mile Guy Fleming Trail offers two scenic overlooks with panoramic views. This trail has the greatest variety of wildflowers, ferns, cacti and pine trees in the reserve.
- 0.4-mile Parry Grove Trail has dramatic ocean views. Steep stairs form the head of this trail. Most of its Torrey pines fell victim to a bark beetle infestation in the 1990s. Ecologists now monitor beetle population using traps on downed pines.
- 0.1-mile High Point Trail offers a 360-degree panoramic view of the reserve and ocean.
- 0.7-mile Razor Point Trail meanders through coastal sage scrub, with views of sculptured sandstone, gnarled trees and the surf 150 feet below. Yucca Point Overlook, accessed from both Razor Point and Beach Trails, features yucca flower displays in spring and examples of sandstone erosion and patterned sculptures called *tafoni*.
- 0.75-mile Beach Trail is a rustic footpath through the upper reserve to the beach 300 feet below.

- 1.3-mile Broken Hill Trail offers views of eroding sandstone; its north fork passes an elfin forest of dense chaparral before joining Beach Trail near Flat Rock.
- 1.5-mile Marsh Trail goes along the southern edge of Los Peñasquitos Marsh Natural Preserve. The trailhead is on the east side of North Torrey Pines Road opposite the South Beach lot.

Trails in the Northeastern Extension

- 0.5-mile Mar Scenic Trail follows the seasonal creek through the extension.
- 0.5-mile Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Trail offers views across the marsh to the main reserve and to the ocean.
- 0.75-mile Margaret Fleming Nature Trail leads through coastal sage scrub.
- 0.3-mile Red Ridge Loop Trail offers views of the lagoon, the main reserve and spectacular geologic formations.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

- The visitor center (Lodge) features exhibits on local wildlife, flowers and geology; it also displays a selection of interpretive publications.
- Free trail maps are available at the visitor center or at most trailheads.
- The reserve has two native plant gardens, one at the front of the visitor center and another (the Whitaker Garden) at the Parry Grove trailhead.



Brown pelican



- Information and schedules for park programs and activities are available at the visitor center and at the website **www.torreypine.org**.
- Docent-led nature hikes for individuals and families are scheduled on weekends and holidays. Check website for times.
- Make group and school program requests at least three weeks in advance at the website above or by emailing **torreypines@parks.ca.gov**.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

- The visitor center is generally accessible. A captioned video is available. Nearby parking and restroom are accessible.
- South Beach restroom and parking are accessible. The path from the lot is sloped; assistance may be required.
- North Beach parking, restrooms and path to beach are usable with assistance.
- A beach wheelchair is available for loan.
- Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, call (916) 445-8949 or visit **<http://access.parks.ca.gov>**.



Help safeguard this beautiful area.

- All natural and cultural features are protected by law and may not be disturbed or removed.
- Stay on the trails. Walking off-trail causes erosion, tramples plants and frightens wildlife.
- The cliffs are unstable and dangerous. Do not climb or walk on or near the cliff tops or bases.
- Picnicking is allowed on the beach. **No food is allowed in the reserve or on the trails** (water is permitted).
- Alcohol may not be consumed within park and reserve boundaries.
- Place all trash in the receptacles provided, or pack it out.
- Smoking is permitted only at the beach; fully extinguish smoking materials and pack them out. No smoking in the reserve.
- Fires are prohibited. Personal portable barbecues are permitted only on the beach. Place hot coals in the hot-coal containers provided.
- Dogs, horses and other animals are not allowed at the reserve or the beach. Visitors with service animals should contact park staff on arrival.
- All types of vehicles are prohibited on trails; bicycles may use only paved roads.



Torrey pine

- Due to the sensitive ecological environment, the number of visitors and vehicles may be limited. If the reserve is full, visitors may be asked to check back later or plan to visit another day.
- Park only in designated spaces. Stopping or parking on road shoulders is not permitted.

This park receives support in part through a nonprofit organization.
For more information, contact:
Torrey Pines Docent Society • P.O. Box 2414
Del Mar, CA 92014 • (858) 755-2063
www.torreypine.org

Torrey Pines

State Natural Reserve/State Beach



Legend

- Paved road
- Paved trail
- Trail
- Railroad
- Accessible Feature
- Beach Stairway
- Locked Gate
- Marsh
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Ranger Station
- Restrooms
- Trailhead
- Viewpoint

